

Online Education during COVID-19 in Bangladesh: University Teachers' Perspective

Mimma Tabassum¹, Seefat E Mannan², Md Iftakhar Parvej^{1*}, Firoyz Ahmed³

¹ Department of Statistics, Noakhali Science and Technology University, Noakhali, BANGLADESH

² Department of Social Work, Noakhali Science and Technology University, Noakhali, BANGLADESH

³ Department of Microbiology, Noakhali Science and Technology University, Noakhali, BANGLADESH

*Corresponding Author: iftakhar.nstu@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

In Bangladesh like the other nations around the world educational sector is highly affected by COVID-19. During this lockdown teachers may help their students to minimize the educational gap. An online survey was conducted from 30 July to 24 September 2020 to collect the information from teacher of different public and private universities. Descriptive statistics was used to find their perceptions about online education, and problems faced related to e-learning. About 88.5% of the participants take online classes during the pandemic among them majority (91.3%) of them were staying at home and continue their online educational support to the students. They may face some problem during the online classes and poor internet connection (69.31%) and lack of logistic support (19.13%) were the main problem they faced. Very few (1.4%) of them think the process are not helping the students to overcome the educational gap. This study will helpful for government and the educational authority to find the overall scenario of online education during lockdown from teachers' point view.

Keywords: COVID-19, lockdown, online education, public and private university teachers, Bangladesh

INTRODUCTION

COVID-19, a highly infectious disease has changed the regular picture of the whole world. Having the severe possibility of spreading among individuals during close contact is causing millions of deaths (Mishra et al., 2020). This pandemic severely impacted the socio-economic and many other basic factors around the world and educational factor is no exception to that.

In March 2020, COVID-19 has resulted in academic closure in Bangladesh (Moralista & Oducado, 2020). This closure of academic institutions severely impacted the majority of the student population and also other involved people of the education sector. Many countries all over the world have started the online education system and they are continuing with this process to minimize the gap (Rahman, 2020). Online education through social media is now the best possible alternative to face to face learning. Platforms like Facebook, Zoom, Google classroom, Google meet etc are some of the mediums through which academic institutions are trying to communicate with the students (Fami, 2020).

Online learning is not that easy for a country like ours. It is a big challenge not only for the learners but also for the teachers. Changes to the educational system including

technical support, administrative planning, maintaining online schedule and data, all are very much new for the teachers. In this regard along with preparing lectures they must have proper skills and knowledge of using technical properties.

Government has taken some initiatives to help the educational institutions to conduct classes in this lockdown. But most of the rural and some underprivileged urban areas are at a disadvantage for continuing this process (Fami, 2020). Both teachers and students from such territories are facing distance issues, limited technical assistance, lack of internet access and financial insufficiency.

Distance learning has many benefits (Al-Husban, 2020; Seage & Türegün, 2020) and limitations (Weinhandl et al., 2020). Many factors are considered as obstacles to e-learning (Gokdas & Kayri, 2005). In a recent study in India found many positive and negative opinions about online education (Arora & Srinivasan, 2020). There are many studies that show the conditions of students experiencing online education but comparatively fewer studies are conducted describing the circumstances of the teachers in this regard.

During COVID-19 lockdown how teachers help their students to minimize the educational gap, their perceptions about online education, and problems related to e-learning are the main aim of this study.

METHODS AND METERIALS

This is an online survey-based study of the 353 private and public university teachers in Bangladesh. An online survey was conducted from 30 July to 24 September 2020 to collect the information by non-probability convenience sampling procedure. A well-structured questionnaire was designed which contained some demographic characteristics and information about online classes, their experience and challenges. Questionnaire link using 'Google form' was sent to respondents through email and Facebook messenger. Prior to starting the survey, the aims, objectives and the confidentiality of given responses were clarified with participants. After reading, participants gave their consent to participate by clicking either "Yes" or "No." A total of 313 participants send complete information regarding the survey. Descriptive statistics were carried out to understand the distribution of study participants. Simple percentage distribution was estimated to assess the opinion on online classes, and problems related to study due to the lockdown. IBM SPSS Statistics 25.0. was used to conducted the statistical analysis.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

A total of 313 questionnaires out of 353 were returned. We had the responding rate of 88.7%, which has been an acceptable rate. The demographic data of the participants are demonstrated in **Table 1**. Of 313 participants, 49.8% were aged below 31 years, 48.9% were aged between 31-50 years, and the rest were aged 51-65 years. Two of every five participants were female. Half of the respondents were resided urban areas, and very few (10.2%) of the respondents were from rural areas. The majority of them were from public universities (81.5%). Half of the students were from the Science academic background (56.2%). One fourth of the teachers experienced more than 06 years in our study.

Educational Status of the Participants

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the participants (n-313)

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Age of the respondents		
Below 31	156	49.8
31-40	113	36.1
41-50	40	12.8
51-65	4	1.3
Gender		
Female	124	39.6
Male	189	60.4
Current place of residence		
Rural	32	10.2
Semi-Urban	123	39.3
Urban	158	50.5
Institutions		
Private University	58	18.5
Public University	255	81.5
Academic background		
Science	176	56.2
Arts	57	18.2
Commerce	80	25.6
Teaching Experience		
Below 02 years	125	39.9
02-05 years	109	34.8
06-10 years	52	16.6
Above 10 years	27	8.6

Figure 1 highlights the educational status of the participants. About 11.5% of the participants did not take online classes during the pandemic. Those who are taking their interactions with students for study purpose majority (91.3%) of them were staying at home and continue their online educational.

Perception about Online Classes

Results given in **Table 2** shows that the Respondents perception and experiences about online classes. Among them 53.1% were taking 02 to 05 online courses and around two of every five respondents spend more than 05 hours per week for online classes. Our study finds that 66.8% of the teachers experienced online classes first time during the COVID-19 pandemic and most 57.1%) of them were developing their online teaching experience. Among them only 10%

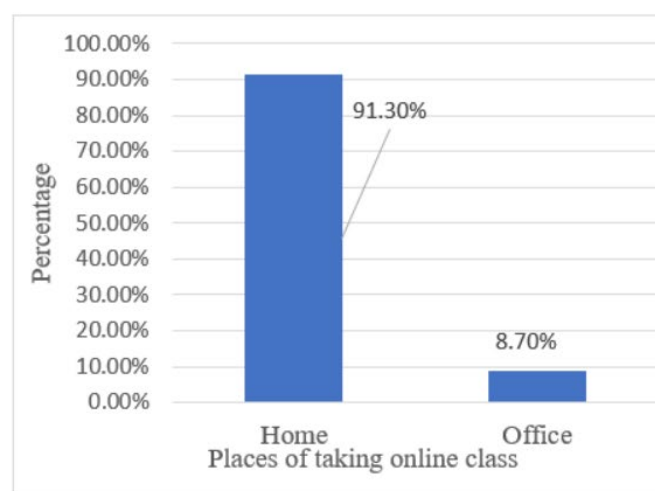
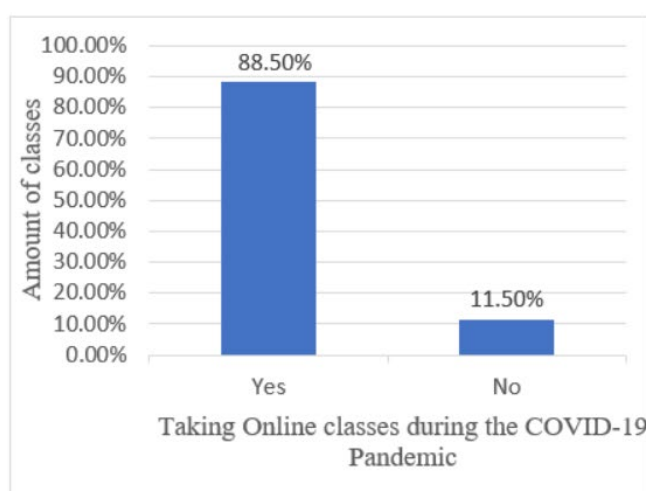


Figure 1. Taking online classes either home or office during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Table 2. Perception and experiences about online classes (n-277)

Variables	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Numbers of online courses taken		
Below 02	20	7.2
02-05	147	53.1
More than 05	110	39.7
Hours giving online classes per week		
01-02 hours	73	26.4
03-04 hours	93	33.6
05-06 hours	63	22.7
Above 06 hours	48	17.3
Online teaching experiences		
Some/little	53	19.1
Regular	39	14.1
First Time	185	66.8
Efficiency in online teaching		
Efficient	107	38.6
Not efficient	12	4.3
Developing/learning	158	57.1
Training taken for online classes		
Peer training/workshops	25	9.9
No training	252	90.1
Gadgets for taking online classes		
Laptop or Computers	220	79.4
Tab	16	5.8
Smartphone	41	14.8
Internet connection for online classes		
Broad Band	129	46.6
Mobile Data	148	53.4

participants of our study taking training about online teaching. 79.4% of our teachers used laptop or computers for taking online classes and half of them were used mobile data to take their classes.

Platform Uses and Problem Facing during Online Classes

Figure 2 illustrate that, for e-lectures, respondents in study were using various platforms such as the Google classroom, Zoom app, Skype. Facebook room, Google meets (meetings) etc. the study revealed that most of the teachers (58.12%) prefer the Zoom app for their e-lectures. Majority of the respondents in our study faced some problem during the online classes and poor internet connection (69.31%) and lack

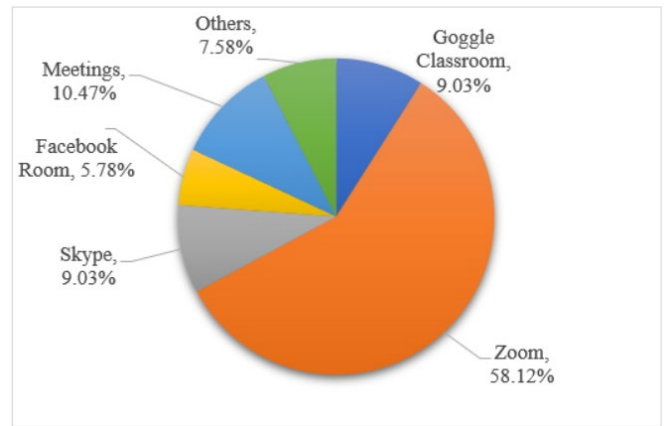


Figure 2. Parentage distribution of platform using in online classes

Table 3. Students participation and evaluation (n-277)

Variables	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Attendance level of your students		
Below 40%	44	15.9
40 to 60%	104	37.5
60 to 80%	97	35.0
Above 80%	32	11.6
Response of the students		
Satisfying	149	53.8
Not Satisfying	128	46.2
Taking any online examinations		
Yes	104	37.5
No	149	53.8
May be	24	8.7

of logistic support (19.13%) were the main problem they faced (Figure 3).

Students Participation and Evaluation

Among the study participants maximum teachers find 40% to 80% during their online classes and students respond rate was fifty-fifty they revealed. More than half of our participants did not take any online examination (Table 3).

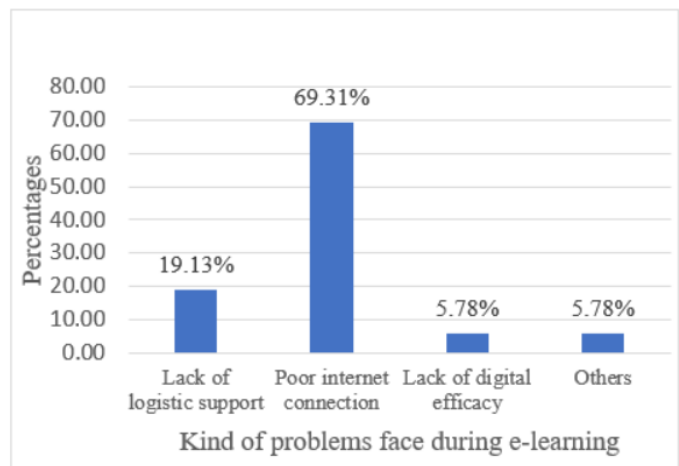
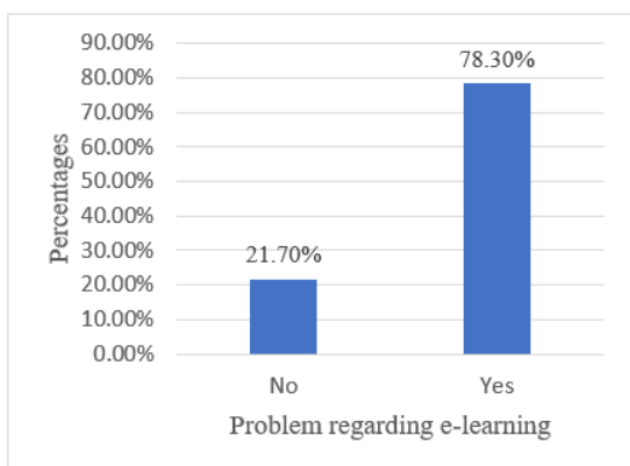


Figure 3. Problem facing during online classes

Table 4. Students participation and evaluation (n-277)

Variables	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Essential to continue the e-learning process		
Yes	221	79.8
No	12	4.3
Not decided	44	15.9
Online education is helping the students to overcome the educational gap		
To a short extent	108	39.0
To an average range	116	41.9
To a large extent	49	17.7
Not a bit	4	1.4
Some subjects are difficult to be delivered through online		
Yes	273	98.6
No	4	1.4

Importance of E-learning Process during Lockdown

Table 4 shows that maximum (79.8%) teachers in our study think that, it is essential to continue this e-learning process and very few (1.4%) of them think the process are not helping the students to overcome the educational gap. They also added some of the subjects are very difficult to delivered through online.

Our study revealed that, majority of the teachers were continuing their e-learning process to help the students to minimize their study gaps. Poor internet connection be the main problem they faced during their class.

CONCLUSION

The academic activities have significantly disrupted and the students are so much frustrated to think about their academic future for this unexpected COVID-19 lockdown. Our study evaluated the teacher's perception about the online education of private and public universities in Bangladesh during this pandemic. Some of the teachers face little bit challenge in online teaching. Our study has revealed the overall scenario and the perceptions about online teaching in under graduation and post-graduation level. We think that it will be helpful for the government and institutional authorities to make an academic decision. By using this information, they can make a plan for the universities to continue the e-learning process during this pandemic.

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